

Please replace the paragraph beginning at ~~page 5, line 5~~, with the following rewritten paragraph:

F<sup>1</sup> ~~Figure 1~~ is a block diagram of an exemplary prior art multi-layered communication network which can be used in implementing an embodiment of the invention;—

Please replace the paragraph beginning at ~~page 5, line 15~~, with the following rewritten paragraph:

F<sup>2</sup> ~~Figure 6~~ is a block diagram of an exemplary prior art computer system on which the invention may be implemented and practiced.—

Please replace the paragraph beginning at ~~page 6, line 23~~, with the following rewritten paragraph:

F<sup>3</sup> ~~Figure 1~~ illustrates an example of prior art multi-layered communication network 100 to which the invention is applicable. In general, multi-layered communication network 100 includes multi-layered nodes 102, 104, communicatively coupled by transmission medium 106. Although multi-layered communication network 100 may resemble the International Standards Organization (ISO) Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) Reference Model (RM), the invention is applicable to any multi-layered communication network.—

Please replace the paragraph beginning at ~~page 13, line 13~~, with the following rewritten paragraph:

F<sup>4</sup> Figure 6 is a block diagram of an exemplary prior art computer system 600 upon which an embodiment of the invention may be implemented. Computer system 600 includes a bus 602 or other communication mechanism for communicating information, and a processor 604 coupled with bus 602 for processing information. Computer system 600 also includes a main memory 606, such as a random access memory (RAM) or other dynamic storage device, coupled to bus 602 for storing information and instructions to be executed by processor 604. Computer system 600 also includes a read only memory (ROM) 608 or other static storage device coupled to bus 602 for storing static information and instructions for processor 604. A storage device 610, such as a magnetic disk or optical disk, is also provided and coupled to bus 602 for storing information and instructions.

#### IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 21, 25 and 33.

Please amend the claims as follows:

- F<sup>5</sup>
2. (Twice Amended) The method of Claim 1, further including the steps of
    - a) performing a communication protocol layer specific encryption of [the] data [on] to be sent across the communication channel at the first network node, and
    - b) performing a communication protocol layer specific decryption of [the] data [on] received from the communication channel at the second network node.